

USCG/ECOLOGY MOA	Protocols Manual	Procedure: 7 Page: Page 1 of 6 Revision: 06/26/2007
Media Relations		

1. PURPOSE/SCOPE

The purpose of the Media Relations Protocol is to establish policies and procedures for the exchange of information and coordination of media relations for events in which both the U.S. Coast Guard District Thirteen (“USCG”) and the Washington State Department of Ecology (“Ecology”) Spills Prevention, Preparedness, and Response Program are involved.

These policies and procedures are designed to enhance the effectiveness of our outreach and avoid conflicts that create public confusion. By combining our efforts, we will increase the expertise and resources at our disposal and avoid duplication of effort.

Instructions contained in this protocol apply to sharing information for the purpose of developing timely key messages and news releases for the media as well as talking points for media interviews.

Incidents and events that pose or simulate an immediate threat to public health, safety and the environment where Ecology and the USCG are both responding, Ecology and the USCG agree to promptly share information with each another. Media leads may be delegated based on the response/operational lead. However, it is acknowledged that the USCG does not typically authorize another agency to report on USCG actions or activities.

2. AUTHORITY/REFERENCES

Memorandum of Agreement on Pollution Prevention and Response between the Commander, Thirteenth Coast Guard District and the state of Washington executed on June 26, 2007.
Section IV – Information Sharing:

C. The Parties agree to coordinate media relations for events in which both parties are involved to avoid conflicts that create public confusion; otherwise, each will refer the media to the other party for information under that agency’s purview.

Documents/Forms

*Northwest Area Contingency Plan, Section – Area Planning Documentation
9610 Public Information Procedures for Spills Incidents*

Ecology

Statutes

RCW 42.17.250 – 42.17.348, Public Disclosure

USCG/ECOLOGY MOA	Protocols Manual	Procedure: 7 Page: Page 2 of 6 Revision: 06/26/2007
Media Relations		

USCG

Statutes

5 USC Sec. 552, Public Information; Agency Rules, Opinions, Orders, Records, and Proceedings

Regulations

49 CFR, Part 7, Public Availability of Information

3. EFFECTIVE DATE/POINTS OF CONTACT

This protocol will take effect immediately upon approval and signature by both parties.

The following people will serve as points of contact for questions concerning this protocol and its implementation:

Ecology

Northwest Regional Office

Public Information Officer

Phone: 425-649-7009

Fax: 425-649-7098

Mailing Address: Washington Department of Ecology, Northwest Regional Office,
3190 – 160th Avenue S.E., Bellevue, WA 98008-5452

Southwest Regional Office

Public Information Officer

Phone: 360-407-6239

Fax: 360-407-6305

Mailing Address: Washington Department of Ecology, Southwest Regional Office,
P.O. Box 47775, Olympia, WA 98504-4775

Central Regional Office

Public Information Officer

Phone: 509-575-2610

Fax: 509-575-2809

Mailing Address: Washington Department of Ecology, Central Regional Office,
15 West Yakima Avenue, Suite 200, Yakima, WA 98902-3401

USCG/ECOLOGY MOA	Protocols Manual	Procedure: 7 Page: Page 3 of 6 Revision: 06/26/2007
Media Relations		

Eastern Regional Office

Public Information Officer

Phone: 509-329-3495

Fax: 509-329-3529

Mailing Address: Washington Department of Ecology, Eastern Regional Office,
4601 North Monroe St., Suite 202, Spokane, WA 99205-1295

Headquarters Spill Prevention, Preparedness and Response Program

Public Information Officer

Phone: 360-407-6990

Fax: 360-407-7288

Mailing Address: Washington Department of Ecology, Spill Prevention, Preparedness, and
Response Program, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600

USCG

13th Coast Guard District

Public Affairs Officer

Phone: 206-220-7237

Fax: 206-220-7245

Mailing Address: U.S. Coast Guard, 13th Coast Guard District, Room 3584, 915 Second
Avenue, Seattle, WA 98174-1067

USCG Sector Portland

Public Affairs Officer

Phone: 503-240-9356

Fax: 503-240-9302

Mailing Address: USCG Sector Portland, 6767 N Basin Ave., Portland, OR 97217

USCG Sector Seattle

Public Affairs Officer

Phone: 206-217-6231

Fax: 206-217-6345

Mailing Address: USCG Sector Seattle, 1519 Alaskan Way S., Seattle, WA 98134

USCG/ECOLOGY MOA	Protocols Manual	Procedure: 7 Page: Page 4 of 6 Revision: 06/26/2007
Media Relations		

4. POLICIES

- A. It is the policy of operational offices and field units of the USCG and Ecology to promptly share information regarding incidents and events subject to jurisdiction of the agencies. *Refer to Protocol 10 - Information Sharing.* Examples of incidents/events to be shared which will likely attract media attention include:
- When the standby emergency response tug at Neah Bay has been dispatched to assist a vessel which is either disabled or has restricted propulsion or maneuverability subject to USCG COTP operational measures.
 - The discovery of evidence of illegal oil discharge by vessel (e.g. oily-water separator bypass situations).
 - Vessels at risk due to extreme weather conditions.
 - Actual or potential oil spills.
- B. It is the policy of Ecology to refer all such information first to the Public Information Officer (PIO) within the appropriate region (or to the Spills Program PIO as a backup) for release to the media. After regular business hours and on holidays and weekends, the information will be referred to the Ecology PIO on standby.

It is the USCG policy to allow maximum disclosure with minimum delay when called upon by the media. Therefore, USCG policy is to disclose what the CG has done, but to inform the media that on-scene field professionals and Ecology counterparts will be forthcoming with more detailed information. It is USCG policy that all such information should be referred to the local unit collateral-duty Public Affairs Officer (PAO) for release to the media. The unit PAO shall inform the district of media interest and release activity.

- C. It is the policy of Ecology to refer all media calls/contacts first to the PIO within the appropriate region (or to the Spills Program PIO as a backup). After regular business hours and on holidays and weekends, all media calls/contacts will be referred to the Ecology PIO on standby duty.

It is USCG policy that individual members may speak only about information for which they are responsible. All calls or questions that exceed their professional scope should be referred to the unit PAO or to the District Public Affairs Office.

USCG/ECOLOGY MOA	Protocols Manual	Procedure: 7 Page: Page 5 of 6 Revision: 06/26/2007
Media Relations		

- D. It is the policy of Ecology that all news releases, advisories, letters to the editor or opinion columns issued by Ecology must be approved by the agency's Communication Director. After regular business hours and on holidays and weekends, the Ecology PIO on standby may have to rely on the approval of news releases and media advisories by the UC or the agency's lead responder.

It is the policy of the USCG that all news releases, advisories, letters to the editor or opinion columns and other communication items be reviewed and approved by the individual command in authority and/or the district office, including the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Determination of USCG news release review standards are set forth in the USCG Public Affairs Manual and DHS Public Affairs Management Directives.

- E. It is the policy of Ecology and USCG to promptly share news releases (relating to incidents listed in 4-A above) with each other prior to release to the media – for informational purposes only, not for approval; see paragraph 4.B for practical limitations. USCG news releases will be e-mailed to the Ecology PIO for the region in which the incident occurred.

After regular business hours and on holidays and weekends, news releases will be shared by the Ecology PIO on standby duty. If a press release is faxed, the PIO will be alerted by telephone. Ecology news releases will be emailed to publicaffairs@pacnorwest.uscg.mil; if Ecology faxes a news release to the USCG, the PAO will be alerted by telephone.

Media leads may be delegated based on the response/operational lead. Ecology and the USCG agree to issue joint media releases, whenever possible, and certainly in the case of a Unified Command response, in situations where both entities share jurisdiction and involvement in the issue, using plain English and Associated Press style.

5. MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

- Percentage of initial press releases coordinated between Ecology and USCG made within agencies' standard (within 30 minutes of PIO notification of incidence occurrence).
- Annual number of joint exercises, drills, or actual incident responses involving public information and media relations coordination as a key focus for evaluation. *Goal: Jointly participate in at least one exercise or drill per year, such as a tabletop exercise or full-scale drill, where public information is a key focus for evaluation.*


USCG/ECOLOGY MOA	Protocols Manual	Procedure: 7 Page: Page 6 of 6 Revision: 06/26/2007
Media Relations		

- Percentage of media reporting on incidents accurately reflecting information provided and coordinated between agencies' PIOs. *Goal: Jointly establish relationships with the media so Ecology and the USCG are relied on by the media to be the first and best trusted sources of information.*

6. APPROVAL



W. T. DEVEREAUX
 Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
 Thirteenth Coast Guard District
 Chief, Prevention Division



DAVID WORKMAN
 Director of Communication & Education
 Washington Department of Ecology

Date: 26 JUN 2007

Date: June 26, 2007